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Review of the regional cooperation framework for Africa, 1997-2001

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Introduction

1. The mid-term review of the first regional cooperation framework (RCF) for Africa, 1997-2001, was carried out in accordance with Executive Board decision 97/9 of 14 March 1997. UNDP commissioned a team of independent consultants to undertake the review of the regional programme from September 1999 to February 2000. The present report reflects a number of critical findings and recommendations of the independent consultants' review of the regional programme and contains a number of suggestions for key directions that UNDP has taken or will take in accordance with the findings and recommendations of the review.

I. The regional context

2. Many promising features characterize the current situation in Africa. For five consecutive years, Africa has registered growth in gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of 1.5 per cent per year. The prospects for the year 2000 are equally positive. There are, however, structural inequalities within the region. The 33 least developed countries (LDCs) have 45 per cent of the population and only 17 per cent of Africa's GDP. Current rates of growth are still not enough to make a significant impact on poverty reduction. Investment levels average about 20 per cent of GDP although a level of 30 per cent is probably required to step up GDP growth rates from the current level to 6 to 8 per cent per annum, the minimum required for an appreciable impact on poverty reduction.

3. The external debt continues to be a persistent major handicap to Africa's development. In Africa's heavily indebted poor countries (HIPCs), the ratio of debt to exports reached 542 per cent in 1997. While the Cologne initiative is a positive step, even when fully financed, it will not enable the HIPCs to be on the right track to meet internally agreed poverty reduction targets — that is to halve the number of people living on less than one US dollar a day by 2015. In sub-Saharan Africa, there is a high degree of inequality in income distribution, which also hampers poverty-reduction efforts: 51 per cent of the population is below the poverty line of one US dollar per capita per day. The average income of the rural poor is only 50 cents per day. Of particular importance in this context is the new focus on poverty of the Bretton Woods institutions. The introduction of the Poverty-Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) is a positive development, in the design and implementation of which UNDP expects to make an important contribution, especially to ensure sustainable human development.

4. The general political outlook of Africa is more promising than a decade ago. The Secretary-General, in addressing the Security Council Ministerial Meeting on Africa (29 September 1999) noted that Africans are taking charge of their political fortunes. The majority of Africans now live under pluralistic regimes. At the Algiers Summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) (July 1999), Africa's leaders affirmed the principle that leaders taking power by violence cannot be considered as equals in an assembly of elected heads of State. While these are encouraging trends, at least 17 countries in Africa are manifesting severe political instability, many of them leading to complex emergency situations.

5. Several other encouraging features have also characterized the regional situation in recent years. There has been considerable attention on African issues in the United Nations system, including the recent sessions of the Security Council on HIV/AIDS in Africa. There have been initiatives by developed countries to offer concessional trading arrangements to the Africa region. The Lomé Convention, with its focus on Africa, has been renegotiated. OAU has emphasized in particular the importance of governance and capacity-building towards that end and has also recognized that subregional institutions must be the pillars on which to build the broader integration process in Africa. Consequently, capacity-building at the subregional level assumes a new significance.

II. The regional cooperation framework

6. UNDP adopted an integrated approach in the RCF to address some of the key concerns of the Africa region. Projects and programmes were to be developed within four areas of concentration: capacity-building for development management; enhancement of governance; private-sector development; and trade and economic integration. The substantive issues to be addressed within each of these areas of concentration were also spelled out in some detail. The resource level anticipated for the RCF was $160 million from core

resources over a five-year period, and a further $133 million from non-core resources. Current anticipated levels are approximately $119 million for core resources and approximately $70 million for non-core resources. These reductions have led to major changes in programme content, and the delivery capacity of many programmes.

7. The RCF and the implementation strategy spelled out, for each thematic area of concentration, the elements of programmes that they should contain. Several important changes have been introduced since the RCF and the implementation strategy were originally set out. Within the area of capacity-building for development management, the early suspension of activities of the Knowledge Network Facility (KNF), primarily due to resource constraints, has significantly affected the outcomes expected in this area of concentration. In the area of governance, which was aimed at building accountable leadership, empowering civil society, supporting pluralism and democracy and building peace and managing conflict, an important new development is the emergence of the Africa Governance Forum (AGF). The AGF is now the pivot around which many activities in this area are being organized. In the area of concentration on trade and regional integration, the trade programme has lagged behind, owing to design problems.

8. The concept of areas of concentration was a critical element in the overall design of the RCF. However, such a conceptual approach has not stimulated coherence and synergy across project and programme activities. In practice, it has been found that the concept needs further refinement for policy development and for programme implementation. A more purposeful approach would be through the concept of clustering, which would entail the express definition of shared programme objectives and detailed operational linkages aimed at advancing a coordinated approach to attaining programme results and impact. Within the regional programme, there are several possible thematic clusters, including projects on conflict prevention and post-conflict situations, the AGF microenterprises and microfinance and a possible cluster of activities in gender and the development of the private sector. The cluster concept requires further, in-depth review to make it more relevant for planning and operational purposes.

III. Regional programme performance

9. The regional programme is making an impact in many directions. It has contributed to strengthening intercountry cooperation in many fields, especially through capacity development. It has contributed to strengthening and creating an institutional infrastructure for African integration at the regional and subregional levels. The policy process at the country level has been enriched, especially through activities such as those in the fields of perspective planning, governance and private sector operations. The RCF has also generated new insights and practices in the broad field of sustainable human development, especially through its active engagement in poverty, gender and employment issues, which have also strong linkages with country-level operations. Particularly noteworthy is the contribution of the RCF to subregional approaches to human development issues; a concerted effort has been made to strengthen intercountry linkages of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector, thereby engaging a wider segment of African society in the operations of the RCF.

A. The evolving programme

10. The following sections assess the performance of the RCF in two ways: (a) by examining briefly the contribution of projects and programmes within their own areas of concentration, as outlined in the RCF document and (b) by judging performance in relation to selected key issues that are important to regional forms of technical cooperation.

1. Capacity-building for development management

11. The approach of the RCF is to develop a coherent strategic response to key areas of capacity-building, working in close collaboration with institutions such as the Africa Capacity-Building Foundation (ACBF). Particular emphasis was placed on expanding the use of long-term perspective planning methodologies, developing subregional and regional policy responses to key issues of sustainable human development and strengthening country capacities to manage aid and debt issues.

12. An important initiative has been the Africa Future Programme for National Long-Term Perspective

Studies (NLTPS) to build technical capacities in economic planning and to create a longer-term vision for African economies. African countries are buffeted by many short-term vicissitudes that prevent them from adequate planning for the longer term, which is critical to development planning. NLTPS studies have been undertaken in 15 countries, and the perspectives generated are being absorbed into short- and medium-term planning. The project has been especially successful in the transfer of experience and expertise between countries and is now viewed as a valuable central facility for technical support to an important group of countries. The significant spin-off from the NLTPS has included the subregional long-term perspective studies (in the South African Development Community (SADC) and West Africa). The Africa Long-Term Perspective Study will also be undertaken in cooperation with the Millennium project, which aims at developing an African position for presentation to the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations. An independent commission made up of prominent African scholars and political leaders has been established to oversee the development and implementation of this project, which, in view of a confluence of interest, has attracted the attention of key donor partners.

13. Within the regional programme, the ACBF represents an innovative, region-wide effort at capacity-building undertaken by UNDP in collaboration with the World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB). The ACBF has emerged as an important institution, to which a recent initiative, the Partnership For Capacity-Building in Africa (PACT), adds another dimension. It enlarges the mandate of ACBF to include a wider range of capacity-building activities, incorporating social issues, and private-sector institutions. The way forward is to strengthen complementary and collaborative relationships between the UNDP regional programme and the ACBF.

14. Partnerships for capacity-building have also been established with the World Bank through the Water and Sanitation for the Poor project and with many other United Nations organizations and bilateral donors, through the African Programme for Onchocerciasis Control. These partnerships began before the current RCF. While the latter, where UNDP has played the lead role in organizing a consortium of donors, is now nearing its end, it is commonly regarded as having made an important contribution to the eradication of river blindness.

15. The Knowledge Network Facility was created as an innovative approach to providing sustainable support to institutional networks in the African region. It has supported several initiatives, such as the Dakar Forum on the future competitiveness of African economies (3-5 March 1999) and the first symposium on the future of the CFA franc (4-6 November 1998), which are ongoing. However, resource constraints have held back its further expansion. The project, which should have made a critical contribution to capacity-building, has not generated the outcomes that were expected.

16. HIV/AIDS has been recognized by UNDP as a major threat to economic and social development in sub-Saharan Africa with a concentration in southern Africa. The HIV/AIDS and Development in Africa project has been redesigned and relocated to southern Africa in response to the immediate needs of countries in the subregion. The project has, inter alia, pursued activities to promote the transfer of best practices in addressing HIV/AIDS, facilitated the development of national strategies on HIV/AIDS in selected countries, and developed generic training material. The aim of the revised project is to address the shortcomings of the original design, including the lack of coherence and operational linkages in UNDP global, regional and country HIV/AIDS projects and the need for an effective mechanism for the exchange of experiences. The redesigned project has benefited from wide-ranging consultations with UNDP resident representatives, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and bilateral and multilateral development partners. These partners have committed significant cost-sharing and parallel financing for the project.

2. Enhancement of governance

17. The regional programme was expected to focus on selected key areas of governance: building leadership capacities; upgrading capacities in the public sector; contributing to improvements in electoral and legislative processes; strengthening civil society organizations; and supporting regional and national efforts in conflict prevention. RCF activities have started to make an important impact in the broad area

of governance. A striking development has been the emerging importance of the Africa Governance Forum (AGF), which emerged within the framework of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa (UNSIA). The aim of the AGF process is to improve the quality of governance and to this end, Governments, civil society and the private sector across countries have been involved. Three high profile forums have been held so far — in Addis Ababa (1997), Accra (1998), Bamako (1999) — and the fourth is to follow in Kampala in the year 2000. The forums have focused on key issues of governance: transparency and accountability, conflict management, and parliamentary processes. Twenty-six African countries and 12 observers have so far participated in the AGF processes. Many projects in the broad area of governance are being linked to the AGF process, providing the AGF with technical inputs, and in turn following up on AGF recommendations. Related projects have been the Africa Governance Inventory, Public Service Ethics in Africa, Training on Conflict Management and Governance for Social Reconciliation in Africa. The Assistance to the Africa Leadership Forum project has also strengthened non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) networking on the issues relating to gender, youth, security and parliamentary processes in Africa through a series of forums, researches and advocacy.

18. An important aspect of the AGF is the national consultation process, where wider stakeholders at the country level have been involved in consensus-building on specific issues on good governance and the formulation of concrete programmes of action. National experience and programmes are shared and exchanged at the forums, which are supported by a number of donors and managed by UNDP and other development partners. The OAU has attached high priority to governance issues and these project activities are in an area where there is significant African and donor convergence of priorities and interest.

19. An emerging thematic priority within the area of concentration of governance is conflict prevention for which there are several projects: Capacity-Building for the OAU Conflict Management Centre; Rebuilding Fractured Communities; and the Coordination of and Assistance to Security and Economic Development. These projects are making a critical contribution towards peace-building processes and mastering and comprehending African conflicts. Several significant studies have been published. The Programme for Coordination and Assistance on Security and Development, a regional project, is a unique initiative aimed at building on the national experience of Mali in small arms control to reach out to the entire Economic Commission for West African States (ECOWAS) region. The project has also attracted support from a wide consortium of governments and substantial cost-sharing contributions. Also worthy of note is the Human Rights Programme for Southern Africa, a joint project of UNDP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

20. The gender programme has contributed to the development of innovative strategies and tools to promote women's participation in elections as voters and candidates. The large turnout of women voters and candidates in local elections in over 50 per cent of the countries of experimentation has been attributed, in part, to the activities carried out under the programme. In partnership with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), businesswomen and technology experts from 17 African countries exchanged visits with women from south Asia; as a result there have been joint ventures and diversification of products. In the Common Market for East and Southern Africa countries, the programme has enhanced business communication so that trade and other information is relayed to businesswomen in both urban and rural areas. Over 200 women entrepreneurs received training in e-commerce and its application to activities such as the production of textiles and food processing through the only regional federation of women entrepreneurs. A media/information technology component has successfully disseminated the programme activities and good practices through broadcast, print and electronic media.

3. Private-sector development

21. The regional programme focuses primarily on strengthening the institutional fabric for private-sector activities, especially for small-scale entrepreneurs, and on promoting the flow of foreign direct investment. The aim is to establish an enabling environment for the development of African entrepreneurs through key policy-oriented projects, including the project to harmonize Africa's business laws (the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA) project). The initiatives of the regional

programme are viewed as a key intervention to generate business and investment in the Africa region. Many bilateral and multilateral donors are supporting the activities of the project, especially through a trust fund managed by UNDP. African entrepreneurial capacities have been upgraded through training and advisory services. The African Management Services Company (AMSCO) provided management services and training to 29 African companies in banking, pharmaceutical, hotels and other industries and services.

22. In the small and microenterprise sector, the focus of the regional programme has been to build the capacities of African entrepreneurs, facilitate technology transfers and improve access to credit and markets. The Enterprise Africa programme has made an impact in nine countries and has stimulated some $4 million worth of parallel funding in these countries. It has offered cooperating partners a framework within which they can organize their activities. The programme has trained nearly 3,000 entrepreneurs and has been the catalyst in generating other programmes in several countries. Three microfinance projects, one in partnership with Women's World Banking, a global NGO, has contributed to the establishment of a network of microfinancing institutions across Africa; the MicroStart project has facilitated the provision of technical support, through support to microfinance institutions and to small enterprises in Africa; and Micro-Save Africa has developed action-oriented research on the impediments and opportunities for the provision of saving services for the poor in Africa. The Africa 2000 Programme has also created an impressive network of institutions in 12 countries; these institutions are focusing on building community initiatives and small enterprises. Africa 2000 has generated significant resources for several donors.

4. Trade and economic integration

23. In this segment the purpose of the RCF was to strengthen regional capacities for trade development, including the building of capacities in the OAU, and also to assist countries to adapt to Uruguay Round agreements. The project on the African Economic Community, which is being executed and implemented by ECA and OAU, has strengthened capacities in OAU and has facilitated and assisted in the development of the OAU protocols for African economic integration in line with the Abuja Treaty. The project faced some initial design problems, which have now been overcome to facilitate the strengthening of regional economic communities and to enhance interregional training and the exchange of experiences and information in line with the OAU emphasis on subregional integration. The OAU views the subregional economic communities as the pillars on which to build Africa's economic integration.

24. The Capacity-building for Trade and Development project concentrated on supporting African Governments in their efforts to develop a common platform and negotiating agenda for the third WTO Seattle High-Level Ministerial Conference held in Seattle, 30 November to 3 December 1999. The project has enhanced the negotiating capacity of African ministers of trade in their negotiations with the European Union for the adoption of the follow-up phase to the Lomé Convention. Other aspects of the project including enhancing the capacity of African institutions to undertake training of government trade officials, the private sector and selected members of civil society in all aspects of Africa's commitments to WTO are yet to be implemented. Other projects aimed at strengthening technical capacity and enhancing regional cooperation within southern Africa include the project on food security and the establishment of an animal genetic resource data bank. Both of these projects have recently started operations.

B. Selected key issues

1. Global mandates/global cooperation framework

25. Although the RCF addresses key issues unique to the Africa region, it has aimed at establishing linkages with the global cooperation framework (GCF) of UNDP, and with the global mandates established by the United Nations system. Projects and programmes in areas such as gender, HIV/AIDS, and food security are aimed at achieving objectives set out in global mandates in these areas. Especially in the area of governance, the regional programme activities have established important linkages with the GCF.

2. Implementing regional agendas

26. The conceptualization and implementation strategy of the key areas of support in the RCF support the mandates established by OAU and other African intergovernmental organizations including General

Assembly resolution 51/32 of 22 December 1996, through which UNSIA was established. The regional programme has transformed these mandates into operational programmes. Key activities have been organized in the areas of governance, economic integration and globalization, peace and security and the development of small-scale enterprises. UNDP has established partnerships with ECA, other United Nations organizations, the Bretton Woods institutions, AfDB and NGOs, to meet Africa's key development challenges. Two projects — on conflict resolution and on economic integration — are aimed at facilitating the implementation of OAU mandates and strengthening OAU capacities. Activities in the area of governance, especially the AGF, are generating interest, both at the regional and country levels, for coordinated and collaborative approaches. The Millennium project, the aim of which is to elaborate, in tandem with the NLTPS, an African vision for the future, has gained the firm financial and technical support of UNDP development partners. African countries have committed an equal amount of resources to the Africa Internet project enabling the introduction of advanced electronic communication facilities in 12 African countries.

3. Country linkage

27. The implementation strategy of the RCF has emphasized the importance of linking regional activities with country-level concerns and operations. Not all regional programmes have equally intensive linkages, and the extent of country-level linkage depends on the nature of the programme. Although reflecting the priorities of African countries for regional cooperation, programmes focused on building the capacity of African regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations, will have only an indirect linkage. There are broadly two types of programmes in terms of intensity of country linkage. Programmes such as those for gender, HIV/AIDS, and conflict prevention offer opportunities for individual countries to benefit from the exchange of experience in addressing issues of common interest. The other type of programme has a more direct engagement with individual countries: programmes such as Enterprise Africa, Africa 2000, NLTPS, Africa Internet and AGF are largely overarching mechanisms that provide support to specific country-level activities and stimulate identifiable project activities in individual countries, which have attracted other sources of funding.

28. Although there are extensive country linkages in projects and programmes, there are also several shortcomings that need to be overcome. Many governments and UNDP country offices have yet to exploit fully the opportunities of the RCF. There is a significant gap in the extent of access to information on relevant RCF programmes at the country level. Individual countries have also observed that they are not fully consulted in the implementation of the regional programme. The Country Initiatives Facility (CIF) was created as an innovative instrument to engage the interest of individual countries by enabling them to initiate their own intercountry programmes as a means of anchoring regional programmes on priorities as perceived at the country level. Owing to the resource constraints, however, future funding of the CIF has been suspended.

4. Capacity development

29. Implementing agencies have been identified not only to undertake activities, but also to develop their own institutional capacities through the implementation process. In the gender programme, over 20 organizations in the Africa region have been involved in implementing activities as subcontractors, and a major aim is to build their own sustainable capacities. The RCF has generated extensive intercountry networking, especially through programmes such as Africa 2000, Enterprise Africa, NLTPS, the production of the *SADC Regional Human Development Report 1998*, and microfinance activities, to name a few. Similarly, many of the activities in the governance area have also led to capacity-building of the stakeholders in different levels through their direct participation in decision-making and implementation.

30. The RCF aims at building African capacities through the optimal utilization of technical and institutional resources in the Africa region. The RCF is making an important contribution to the growth of an intercountry infrastructure of key institutions that can stimulate the cooperative and integrative processes in the region.

5. Innovations and best practices

31. Several innovations and best practices can be observed in implementing the RCF. The AGF is

emerging as the pivot around which many governance issues are addressed in the region. It has also attracted considerable donor support. Assessing and building on the African experience in comparative governance offers many opportunities for advancing the agenda of good governance. Through its capacity to mobilize the direct interest of African political leadership, the AGF has developed into an effective mechanism in partnership-building. In the area of conflict management, a network of traditional chiefs was established in West Africa to exchange experience on peace and conflict resolutions. The Programme for Cooperation and Assistance on Security and Development (PCASED) is an apt illustration of the transfer of best practices. As noted in paragraph 19, it builds on the successful experience of Mali in small arms control and translates that experience into the wider West African context. It has attracted the interest of many bilateral donors. The NLTPS and Enterprise Africa projects have made an important contribution in the transfer of intercountry experience and best practices in their particular fields. The extensive engagement of NGOs/CSOs in the Gender programme has opened up new opportunities for intensive interaction with the NGO community. The project for the preparation of the *SADC Regional Human Development Report 1998* has been executed by an NGO, and this experiment can now be extended to other subregions. The food security project in southern Africa is being executed by SADC, which is an intergovernmental body, and this practice could be extended in the future. Those best practices should be replicated to other parts of the region as well as globally where applicable.

6. Partnerships

32. The RCF has developed linkages with its traditional partners, and also with several non-traditional ones. The traditional partners have been organizations such as OAU and ECA, subregional organizations such as ECOWAS, SADC, East African Cooperation, Economic Community for Central African States (ECCAS), and bilateral and multilateral partners such as the World Bank. There are many kinds of partnership arrangements with these organizations. The RCF sets its agenda in accordance with the priorities of these African organizations. In a more operational context, there are many linkages with these organizations through projects and programmes. Two key projects were developed with OAU, and similarly with ECA. There is a cluster of activities emerging with ECOWAS and SADC that can enhance the impact of the regional programme through developing greater synergies. The World Bank has been an important partner in the context of the ACBF and AMSCO, which is sponsored by the International Finance Corporation.

33. A noteworthy feature has been the building of partnerships and consortium arrangements with more non-traditional partners on a regional scale. These new partners include NGOs, CSOs, community-based organizations (CBOs), research institutes and the private sector. A large number of research institutions, NGOs and the private sector are operationally engaged in implementing the regional programme. They are emerging as key partners in capacity-building and in extending linkages to country-level activities, and also in developing intercountry networks. This is observed in programmes such as Enterprise Africa, Gender Mainstreaming, Africa 2000 Network, the *SADC Regional Human Development Report 1998* and many others. The RCF has also enhanced its partnership with bilateral donors, within the framework of several programmes, especially in the areas of governance, small arms control, Africa 2000 and Enterprise Africa.

7. Resource mobilization

34. The RCF has not obtained the resource levels that were anticipated. The major shortcoming has been in core resources, which have declined by one third of the amount planned at the approval of the RCF. Although non-core resources have not been forthcoming to the extent anticipated, there have been several encouraging events. The area of governance has attracted a number of donors, enabling the AGF process to develop a strong momentum. The Internet Initiative for Africa is noteworthy in having generated significant government cost-sharing from all participating countries. Similarly, the PCASED project has also generated a significant level of resources from many donors. Other programmes such as Africa 2000, Enterprise Africa, the Millennium Project and NLTPS have also generated cost-sharing and parallel financing resources. Total resources mobilized through cost-sharing and trust fund arrangements amount to $50 million for the period 1997-2001. It is observed that donors are favourably inclined towards many regional programmes that are closely intertwined with their own regional priorities.

8. Indicators and criteria for success

35. The implementation strategy of the RCF laid down explicit expected results and success criteria. It is now clear that these were too broadly and too ambitiously defined. The regional strategic results framework (SRF) has been developed to establish firm outputs and to enhance the synergies of regional projects. The regional SRF establishes attainable benchmarks for the measurement of success and for the attainment of realistic RCF targets. In addition, the regional SRF, by identifying specific outcomes and key partnerships, facilitates greater collaboration with activities undertaken outside the framework of the regional programme. The SRF places greater emphasis on outputs, linkages, and partnerships as intermediate benchmarks towards the attainment of programme impact, as the latter cannot be isolated for any given project or programme within the context of the RCF.

IV. Management

36. Integrated management of the RCF process is a complex activity that demands the orchestration of the activities of a large number of stakeholders. Overall management is also currently in review in line with the UNDP transition.

A. Executing arrangements

37. Nearly 80 per cent of RCF projects and programmes are executed by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). As the executing agency, its primary function is to undertake the administrative, financial and managerial tasks of individual projects and programmes. The role of UNOPS in the provision of technical backstopping varies between projects.

38. Apart from UNOPS, a few projects are being executed by other agencies such as ECA, FAO, ILO, and by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. One key project — *SADC Regional Human Development Report 1998* — is being executed by an NGO research institution, the Southern African Regional Institute for Policy Studies in Harare; its performance has been satisfactory. There is also one project — the Food Security project, that is being executed by a subregional organization, SADC. It is too early to assess its performance. The modality of execution by intergovernmental organizations and NGOs is being carefully observed, since there are increasing opportunities to utilize these bodies for project and programme execution, and thereby enable the further development of indigenous African capacities.

B. Principal Project Representative (PPR)

39. In the chain of management of the regional programme, the role of the PPR is critical to successful outcomes. The experience with RCF operations has been that the PPR has played a key role in several projects in facilitating horizontal linkages through the convergence of regional projects within thematic areas and vertical linkages with country programmes. The role of the PPR is important in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of regional projects. The substantive role, as distinct from the administrative role, of the PPR clearly depends on factors such as the human and financial resources available to a country office. The efficient implementation of the regional programme requires that the PPR arrangement be clearly defined and flexible, with the aim of providing support to and facilitating the efficient implementation of the regional programme. In this context, the role of the PPR will be further reviewed.

C. Technical backstopping

40. There is no single methodology to provide technical services to projects and hence a diversity of experience is observed. The Regional Bureau for Africa was involved in the provision of technical backstopping in projects such as those for NLTPS and governance. In other instances, UNDP in-house technical resources have been deployed — for example, those of the Bureau for Development Policy for support to regional programme implementation. An important source of technical backstopping has been secured from institutions and individuals in the Africa region as part of implementing agents. Some projects have organized their own sources of technical expertise, especially through networking, as evident in programmes such as those for gender, the Human Development Report of the SADC region, Africa 2000, and Enterprise Africa.

41. The current arrangements for technical backstopping are under review. The objective is to

draw from the multifaceted experience that is now emerging, so that they can be better organized, and lessons drawn from the outcomes. An important aim will be to develop longer-term, sustainable partnerships between UNDP and African institutions so that the institutions can emerge as centres of excellence in key areas of development.

D. Monitoring, evaluation and quality control

42. The monitoring of programmes has been undertaken through progress reports, field visits and regular tripartite reviews. Projects and programmes steering committees have also regularly watched progress. Several evaluations have been undertaken of major programmes — gender, civil society empowerment, MicroStart — and others are planned in year 2000. Adjustments are being effected to projects based on these reviews and evaluations. It is also expected that there will be thematic reviews and evaluations of clusters constituted of related projects. There have been ongoing reviews of quality although it is now recognized that improvements have to be effected in this regard.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

43. Through its support to country-level operations, and through strengthening capacities at the subregional and regional levels in the broad area of sustainable human development, the RCF has made an important contribution in developing the capacities of institutions and human resources in the Africa region. There has been extensive engagement of NGOs/CSOs and the private sector in the RCF process. Regional and subregional technical cooperation processes have been enhanced through the regional programme. It is continuing to provide an important contribution to the evolving processes of subregional and regional integration. Particularly important contributions have been made in the areas of governance, national and subregional perspective planning, gender, conflict prevention and private-sector development focusing on small and medium-scale entrepreneurs.

44. In implementing the RCF, UNDP has established partnerships with many African organizations, governmental, non-governmental, the private sector and with bilateral and multilateral donors. There are further opportunities for new initiatives in expanding the network of partner institutions, and for anchoring projects and programmes within indigenous African institutions. Improvements need to be effected in current modalities (a) to engage partner institutions to participate more actively in technical backstopping for projects and programmes and (b) to strengthen their own capacities so that they can develop specialized capacities to address key and critical issues in the region.

45. Although the RCF is continuing to make an important contribution, there are several shortcomings. They arise partly from the resource constraints that projects and programmes have suffered from, in view of reductions in project allocations and partly from conceptual and implementation deficiencies. As noted in paragraph 8, the concept of areas of concentration has not stimulated the expected coherence and synergy: the areas are too loosely defined and too open-ended. The clustering of projects is probably a better approach than linkages within areas of concentration. Many adverse effects have occurred due to resource shortfalls since correspondingly sharp reductions are expected in project and programme activities and outputs. The linkage of projects and programmes with country-level activities also needs to be improved, especially in ensuring better flows of information. Furthermore, management arrangements for the RCF must be improved and further refined, especially in the strategic relationship between RBA and UNOPS. There are also more opportunities for engaging intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations as executing and implementing agencies.

46. While core resources for the RCF declined, non-core resources mobilized so far have not reached the levels anticipated. In several areas, projects and programmes have been successful in mobilizing significant non-core resources. The RCF has the opportunity to mobilize larger resources, especially through developing strategic partnerships with multilateral and bilateral donors; these will be pursued.

B. Recommendations

47. It is recommended that:

(a) The regional programme continue to enhance the linkages between United Nations global mandates and African regional priorities and mandates. The regional cooperation framework should serve as a platform for the operationalization of the United Nations global mandates, especially in areas such as human rights, gender, governance and initiatives designed to promote African peace and security;

(b) In light of the resource constraints faced by the regional programme, a well-defined resource mobilization strategy be developed to strengthen partnerships further, with multilateral and bilateral donors taking into consideration the priority development concerns of African and bilateral and multilateral development partners;

(c) The mid-term review office regional programme serve as the starting point for the rigorous examination of all the projects and programmes in the RCF so that only high priority activities are implemented. The process of establishing a refocused regional programme should be firmly based on a selected number of high-priority African regional objectives. It should incorporate lessons learned from innovative approaches to the implementation of the regional programme, the possibility of establishing shared priorities with traditional and non-traditional development partners and of exhibiting concrete results in the medium term;

(d) The initiative to enhance the technical capacities of African organizations and institutions through their selection as executing and implementing agencies should be further explored in intercountry collaborative activities;

(e) The regional programme should incorporate the outcomes, outputs and indicators of the regional SRF, emphasizing the optimal modality for the symbiotic cross-linkages of regional projects in those thematic areas where shared outcomes and objectives result in strengthened technical capacities and in managerial and administrative economies of scale;

(f) Innovative regional projects and instruments that promote the sharing of lessons learned, foster the adoption of unique operational modalities and exploit new areas for strategic partnerships continue to be prioritized and replicated within the regional programme;

(g) Current efforts to enhance and stimulate the interactive enriching experience between country-level and regional activities continue, especially through cluster meetings of UNDP resident representatives at the subregional level. Such cluster meetings should enhance the interconnectedness of regional activities with national-level operations, where feasible, and be expanded not only to those of UNDP, but also to the activities of other bilateral and multilateral donors who can benefit from actions at the regional scale.

Annex

Financial summary

Region: Africa
RCF period: 1997-2001
Period under review: 1997-1999

	Regular resources		
	Amount originally assigned[a]	*Amount actually assigned*[b]	*Actual expenditures 1997-1999*
Programme areas	(Thousands of US dollars)		
Capacity-building for development management	38 335	29 999	22 205
Enhancement of governance	18 591	14 549	17 248
Private-sector development	18 399	14 398	12 619
Trade and economic integration	20 704	16 202	14 103
Subtotal	**96 029**	**75 148**	**66 175**

	Other resources		
	Amount originally assigned[a]	*Amount actually mobilized*[b]	*Actual expenditures 1997-1999*
Programme areas	(Thousands of US dollars)		
Capacity-building for development management	25 834	24 811	18 125
Enhancement of governance	15 116	14 430	10 998
Private-sector development	11 357	6 196	5 084
Trade and economic integration	27 673	1 998	1 861
Subtotal	**79 980**	**47 435**	**36 068**
Total	**176 009**	**122 583**	**102 243**

[a] Prorated for period under review.
[b] Prorated for period under review.